

97N-0451

MONTEREY COUNTY



Department of Social Services

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FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

OFFICE FOR AGING, COMMUNITY, AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Area Agency on Aging
Community Action Agency

Marie A. Glavin, Assistant Director Social Services

Comments: Town Meeting on President Clinton's new Produce Safety Initiative on
Wed. Dec. 10, 1997 from 9 am to 4 pm.
Salinas Community Center, Gabilan Room, 409 N. Main St., Salinas, CA 93908.

From: Elsa Ramirez Brisson, MPH, RD
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Programs: Older American's Act Elderly Nutrition Programs, Title III C1 & C2
In-Home Supportive Services, Nutrition Consultation

COMMENTS, QUESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS:

1. Consumers are confused about "value-added" vegetables and the need to rinse and/or wash before using. Grocery store chain staff have recommended the rinsing of the vegetables. Concerns arise then from the vegetables consumed straight out of the packaging such as the salad bowls and kid snacks. Is there uniformity in the sanitation requirements imposed on all the manufactures of these products?
2. Concern about the spraying or misting at regular intervals of produce in the markets. I assume that this process is to ensure that products not wilt while being held longer in the cooled bins. Wet produce products could mildew. Vitamin loss is promoted by heat, light, water and time. All except light are conditions that the misted produce is subjected to.
3. Suggestions needed on how to field questions from consumers about residues on fruits and vegetable products. Since most fruits and vegetables are sold in bins product information that may be on the box is lost to the consumer. The recent out breaks of food borne illness originating in fruits has renewed the concern especially among senior citizens about the safety of foods. *(I personally feel we need to emphasize the cost/benefit of fruits and a vegetable to overall long-term health verses the risk of small doses of residues. To support this argument, I need condensed and referenced research reports as well as up-to-date information of changes in the industry to minimize pesticides and other pollutants.)*

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PLEASE REPLY TO:

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4. I support the concept of point of purchase food and nutrition information in multiple languages and low-literacy formats. Short video clips and audio formats for the marketing get the consumers attention. Distribution of these marketing materials to providers of food and nutrition information in the traditional settings such as classrooms and clinics is helpful. As an educator I find that asking clients and students if they have seen the promotions such as five a day or the new packaging on milk cartons reinforces both my message and the message at the store. I find that often times the posters and messages have become just part of the scenery at the store and reminding individuals about them makes them shop in a more aware mode the next time.
5. I support the creation of the new federal guide on Good Agricultural Practices for fresh fruits and vegetables.
Please use a format that is easy to read to include:
 - ☐ the use of larger type, no government abbreviations and jargon;
 - ☐ index and cross index so the topics from "farm to fork" are easy to find
 - ☐ include on the web and in the document, sound bytes, copy for newsprint and newsletters for use with consumers.

Cc:

Kalah Bumba, MS, Acting Director, Monterey County Area Agency on Aging
All Nutrition Program Contractors in Monterey County
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